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February 10, 2020

The Honorable John B. Rhodes  
Chair  
State of New York Public Service Commission  
Three Empire State Plaza  
Albany, NY 12223-1350

Dear Chairman Rhodes:

I write today on the heels of a widespread Spectrum service outage that impacted a large swath of New York State, and in particular, my congressional district (NY-22).

While I appreciate the efforts Spectrum put into restoring service, this past weekend's outage lasted several hours and impacted both residential and business customers, like restaurants who were unable to process credit card transactions. Many people are surprised with both how long the outage lasted and the huge geographic area it enveloped.

The people of New York both rely upon and pay greatly for Spectrum services, something I have railed against. However, aside from the financial stresses this outage delivered to residential and business customers, it puts forth a more serious security issue of redundancy failure the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) must immediately investigate and publicly report the findings.

According to the company's official Twitter account, Spectrum has informed the public that the outage was caused by a "fiber optic damage." The PSC must immediately determine where, how and why this outage was able to cripple the entire Northeast region for as long as it did, and what measures are in place to ensure this kind of an outage does not happen again.

Given the monopoly-like control Spectrum has over my congressional district, the subjects of redundancy, public safety and customer service are all critical components of an investigation. Therefore, I urge the PSC to announce an investigation into the recent and widespread service disruption that answers at least four questions:

- 1) What specifically caused the recent Spectrum widespread service outage?
- 2) What measures are in place to ensure redundancies in internet and cable service, and did Spectrum violate any redundancy mandates as it relates to this outage or its service agreement with New York State?
- 3) What will the company do to ensure this kind of a sustained outage does not happen again?
- 4) Will any fines be levied and are customers (residential or business) owed money because of the outage and disruption?

The PSC owes it to New Yorkers to hold Spectrum accountable on this issue. While Spectrum did not do anything nefarious to deliver the recent and wide disruption, the company remains responsible --and abundantly capitalized-- by New Yorkers who continue to be disappointed by their business practices.

Please feel free to contact my office should you have any further question regarding a possible investigation into this recent and widespread outage. While disruptions do happen, this most recent one raises too many serious questions to just move on.

Sincerely,

Anthony Brindisi  
Member of Congress